

Alexander (D.)  
REASONS

FOR

# METHODISM


BRIEFLY STATED,

IN THREE LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

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How long halt ye between two opinions ? if the Lord be God,  
follow him. 1 Kings chap. 18 verse 21

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REASONS

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METHODISM

ILLUSTRATED,

IN THREE LETTERS TO A FRIEND.



Printed by G. & J. Smith, 10, St. Paul's Church-Yard, London.

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1783



you please on what I shall have offered to you

You cannot have been long in that I was at an  
*Letter,* I have been long in that I was at an

*Dear Sir,* I have been long in that I was at an

That the late change which has taken place in my opinions and conduct, should have afforded matter of surprize to you and some others of my friends, is no more than I expected. But that you in particular should express so much concern on the occasion, that you should even dispute the sincerity of my intentions, and attempt to intimidate me from pursuing the course I have begun, by painting in such glaring colours the consequences which you suppose likely to result from so sudden and unexpected an event, is to me likewise a source of uneasiness. I do not understand why you should be sorrowful on an occasion which yields me the most abundant joy and satisfaction; yet it is more strange that you should reflect upon the sincerity of my intentions, when at the same time you assure me that I am pursuing a line of conduct which must inevitably expose me to the ridicule of a great part of my friends, and the contempt of the gay and fashionable circles of society.

To satisfy your doubts, to lessen your astonishment, and to prevent the necessity of any future application to me on the subject, I will lay before you as briefly as I well can, the causes which have contributed to effect this change, and open to you the real state of my mind with respect to matters which I conceive of the first importance to be believed and attended to. After which you are at liberty to make your own comments, and to put any constructions

you please on what I shall have offered to your consideration.

You cannot have been ignorant that I was at an early period of my life, initiated into the first principles of Religion; and as I was designed for the Church during the greatest part of the time I remained at School, I received a suitable education.

I devoted great part of my leisure hours to the reading of religious books, and accustomed myself to make occasional extracts from such passages as appeared most worthy of regard. I never neglected my prayers, most of which were of my own composition, and made it a point of reading a certain portion of Scripture every day. By these means I acquired an habit of devotion, and of serious meditation, which proved a source of real satisfaction, and the exercise of which constituted at that time one of the highest pleasures I was capable of enjoying. By degrees however when I came to mix more in society, saw more into the manners, dispositions and pursuits of mankind, and being called to the study of a profession with which I was totally unacquainted, and very different from that which I had expected to have been brought up to, I became less fixed in my principles, and the things of time and sense began to engross a larger share of my attention. Soon after some of the writings of the late Dr. Jebb, Mr. Lindsay's apology, and several of Dr. Priestley's works upon the subject of natural and revealed Religion, were put into my hands. The reasoning contained in these books seemed so plausible and even convincing to my mind, that I found no difficulty in rejecting as false and unreasonable many of those opinions which I had hitherto held sacred; I even ridiculed the doctrines of original sin, the atonement and justification by faith, with many others. In short I became

a perfect soeinian. As such I could no longer in conscience join with the service of the Church; and prudential motives preventing me from attending the unitarian Chapel, I went to no place of public worship at all.

I had not long adopted these principles, before an opportunity occurred to me of reading Helvetius, and a few of the delstical writings of Voltaire. These together with the conversation of some individuals of a similiar persuasion, presently wrought in me another change. I rejected now the authority of the Scriptures entirely, looked upon every attempt to establish a revelation as an imposition on the credulity of mankind, and no sooner saw myself freed from the shackles of Christianity, than I vainly applauded my courage in having at length shaken off the prejudices of education, and triumphed in my own superior discernment, and what I thought were more just and rational views of nature. I continued in this state of mind for some years, when one day I accidentally took up a book published by the celebrated Neckar on the importance of religious opinions. The high repute in which this author was held both at home and abroad as prime minister and as a statesman, induced me to give it a perusal. I soon perceived the superior elegance of stile, and the spirit and energy with which it was written. The candour and liberality of sentiment which ran thro' the whole of it, recommended it strongly to my most serious attention. On reflection I began to see the errors I had been led into, his arguments convinced me of the beneficial influence of religion on our happiness, and on our conduct, and of its indispensible connection with public order and security. But then tho' my mind was convinced of the truth of these principles, yet I wanted power and resolution to



reduce them to practice. I wanted an adequate motive to produce the effect. The efforts of unassisted reason I knew were ineffectual, the passions were strong, the temptations to indulge them numerous and enticing. Even the constant avocations of business co-operated to divert my thoughts into other channels, thus however good my inclinations might have been, the voice of conscience was stifled, and I once more relapsed into a state of indifference, and lived as without God in the world.

The last March reading as was my custom the Analytical Review, my attention was directed to the character of a book of which the most honourable mention was made; and the extracts there quoted, and which I perused with seriousness, impressed me with an idea of its extraordinary merit. I immediately ordered the work, which was Paleys evidences of Christianity; and tho' I presently procured it, yet, from one cause or another, it lay by me some time unopened from that time till the beginning of september. During the preceding month, I had had several conversations with some friends on the subject of religion in general; the exercises of my professional duties afforded me an opportunity of associating a good deal with people among the Methodists, who were kind and free enough to communicate to me their sentiments on matters of this nature. I began to think they were more comfortable and happy under the influence of their opinions than I was under the influence of mine, that their life was chequered with fewer evils, and their conduct throughout more consistent with reason and virtue. I even envied them their lot, I lamented my own inability to adopt their persuasions, It was in vain that they talked to me of the

comfortable assurances of the Holy Spirit, of the willingness of God to receive sinners, and to answer the petitions of those who come in his Sons name; it was to little purpose that they endeavoured to impress on my mind the efficacy of divine grace, or the excellence of the Christian morality, when I denied the authority of the records themselves from whence these doctrines are derived. I reasoned however thus with myself. "The scheme of Christianity involves  
 " a subject of importance, it is either true or false.  
 " A candid enquiry into its evidences is the most likely  
 " way of deciding the question. I have hitherto jud-  
 " ged it false: but on what grounds? Have I considered  
 " attentively the nature and number of its evidences?  
 " I am sensible I have not, I have only taken a partial  
 " and superficial view of the subject, and from a know-  
 " ledge of this part I have condemned the whole; in  
 " other words because I could not reconcile certain  
 " parts to my own reason, because I could not reduce  
 " them to a level with my own understanding, and  
 " make them accord with my Ideas of the goodness  
 " and wisdom of God, I have had the audacity to re-  
 " ject the whole system as spurious. But surely this  
 " kind of reasoning founded on so imperfect an ac-  
 " quaintance with the subject itself must be altoge-  
 " ther unsatisfactory and inconclusive, even when  
 " applied to matters of inferior moment: So that in  
 " the present instance, I must confess I have formed  
 " an hasty and premature opinion, and the most  
 " propable supposition is that I must be mistaken.  
 " I will therefore re-examine the subject, and as per-  
 " haps both my present and future happiness are in-  
 " terested in the decision, it can be esteemed no loss  
 " of time to give it the most serious attention." By  
 this train of reasoning I persuaded myself to apply  
 diligently to the work in hand. I recollected I had

by me the evidences of Christianity mentioned above:

I delayed not a moment, I read, I studied, I reflected, I perused the two volumes twice over in a short time. I have reason to bless the hour in which I first took them up. A new light of Evidence dawned upon my mind; a vast and unexplored field of argument displayed itself to my view; I saw the narrowness of the human intellect, the futility of my former reasonings, the absurdity of my fancied objections and the ignorance upon which they were founded, and it pleased the Almighty God to make that book instrumental in restoring me to a sense of duty, in inspiring me with new and purer sentiments of Religion, and in establishing my faith on a foundation which shall not be shaken, and against which, I am well persuaded the gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail.

Having therefore satisfied myself of the authenticity and divine authority of the HOLY SCRIPTURES, and of the truths of the doctrine contained in them, my next business seem'd to be to study attentively and methodically the New Testament, as being that portion of Scripture most material for us, as Christians to know and understand, and afterwards to read the Prophets, whose writings bear a closer connection with, and more frequent allusions to Christ and the objects of his mission, than any of the other books of the Old Testament. This being done taking care at the same time to offer up fervent petitions to the throne of grace, that God would grant me the assistance of his *holy spirit*, to fit my mind for the reception of revealed truth, I then thought it my duty to consider as impartially as I could the particular nature and design, of those doctrines of which the Bible gives an account. By this means I might be able to compare them with the avowed tenets and opinions of different sects of Christians amongst us, being resolved to unite



myself with that sect, whose mode of faith and conduct should appear to me most conformable, to the general tenor of the Gospel dispensation.

After mature deliberation, and I may truly say, unawed by fear of what I might lose, and uninfluenced by the hope of worldly gain, I embrace Methodism. The reason which determined me, you will see explained in the two following letters.

In the mean time rest assured that I shall never cease to respect the church as established by law, pray for its prosperity, and partake gladly as occasion offers in its ordinances. May the God of Heaven and Earth, enlighten with his wisdom the King of these Realms; and may vital religion, solid liberty, public order, and inflexible loyalty reign in every heart, and animate every soul,

I am

your sincere friend,

*Disney Alexander.*

In a few *days* the second and third letters will be published.

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Your sincere friend,

James Alexander.

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Letter 2.

Dear Sir,

I am aware that all the different sects into which Christianity is divided, profess to derive their respective tenets from the Scriptures, and appeal to these alone for the proof of the doctrines they advance. But this diversity of opinions is easily accounted for, if we consider the numerous prejudices we necessarily imbibe in our younger years, and from which men of the most liberal education and enlightened understanding are not exempt.

We form our ideas of things before we are capable of judging of the truth, or propriety of them; and this prepossession is apt to contract our minds, darken our understandings, and is often so fixed and rivetted as to withstand the clearest evidence.

Moreover worldly interest sometimes interposes its baneful influence, and sooner than resign any of those alluring prospects it flatters us with, we wilfully shut our eyes against the light, refusing to listen to the voice of the charmer, charmer he never so wisely. Others again actuated by pure motives, but erring from an incorrect and premature judgment make up their minds upon the subject, without having studied sufficiently the records from whence they deduce their principles; in other words from a partial information, they draw a general con-



clusion. Some may be deterred by a sense of shame, and by dread of ridicule from giving so much of their time and attention to matters of this kind, as to enable them to form a right judgement; and having already business enough to engage their thoughts, are glad of the opportunity of sheltering themselves under the shadow of that religion, whatever it may be, which their fathers professed before them, and in which they themselves were educated, and so take no farther pains or concern about it.

It appears to me that it is the indispensable duty, of all those who have ability and opportunity of searching and examining the holy scriptures, to read and think for themselves. They ought by no means to rest content with building their faith upon the opinions of others, but are bound to investigate its evidences, and after having proved all things, then to hold fast that which is good. Being once fully satisfied of the authenticity of the gospel history, they should study with diligence the bible and at first the bible only, that their minds might not be warped by any comments or explanations which other authors have given and which might be apt to bias their judgment and preclude the necessity of their own more sedulous exertions. This plan of study should be accompanied with frequent and fervent prayers to the Almighty, that he would be pleased to vouchsafe his holy spirit to direct their enquiries, and to lead them in the way of truth.

Whoever begins and perseveres in a plan of this kind, actuated by a sincere love of God and an earnest longing after truth, will, I apprehend, be sure of succeeding in his labours; and whatever sys-

tem of opinions he may ultimately form, however he may deviate in some particular points from many of his brethren, such a man, I have no scruple in believing, will find favour and acceptance with his God, and prove himself by his life and conduct a zealous and faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Having premised thus much, I shall proceed to the main object of my letter, and give you my reasons in an open and unequivocal manner for my entering into the methodist connection.

I would first direct your attention to a few of the most important doctrines taught by the methodists.

These are, original sin ; the atonement ; justification by faith, and the new birth. By the first of these we are instructed to believe that man was created in the image of God ; upright, happy and not subject to death. That he was endowed with the means of grace to continue in this state so long as he loved God and persevered in his duty ; but that at the same time he had the liberty of chusing either good or evil. A blessing and a curse were set before him ; he knew the conditions on which he enjoyed the former, he was forewarned of the inevitable certainty of the latter, if he deviated from the path of virtue.

Yielding however to the suggestions and artifices of Satan, unmindful of the mercies he had received, and aspiring after new sources of happiness, he in time became corrupt, and his affections were alienated from the true God. He disobeyed the express *command* of his Creator, and in consequence sin, misery and death, were introduced into the world. For not only Adam by these means for-

feited the Divine favour, but his posterity likewise were necessarily implicated in his guilt. All men in all nations from that time to the present are born sinners; and as long as they remain such, are under the condemnation of Gods law.

Let us see first, how this doctrine agrees with what the Scriptures have made known to us. And here I observe, that it is not a solitary text scattered here and there, in which we find this melancholy truth confirmed; nor is it expressed in metaphorical or obscure language; it is asserted in almost every book, and in the most positive terms which language would admit; it is alluded to either directly or indirectly throughout the whole substance of both the old and new Testament; and it evidently constitutes the basis or foundation of most of the other doctrines of the Bible. The following quotations will I apprehend prove the truth of what has been advanced.

That man was originally formed upright and happy, is evident from the account given of the Creation in the first chapter of Genesis, Gen. 1. 26, 27. 28. *And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

And in the last verse of the same chapter we read, that God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. In the Psalms we read that God



made man a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of his hands; and hast put all things under his feet. Psalms VIII. 5. 6.

We find however that Adam soon deviated from his original righteousness, and that the world through him became corrupt, Genesis III. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 16. 17. 18. 19. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food; and that it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, and I hid myself. And he said, hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? and the woman said the serpent hath beguiled me and I did eat. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and Thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;

*for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art , and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Genesis vi. 5. we read that God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. verse 12. we are told that God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt : for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

We are told that *The children of men are corrupt---they have done abominable works.---that there is none that doeth good,---that they are all gone aside ; they are altogether become filthy.---that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,---that there is no man that sinneth not.*

The Scripture hath concluded all men under sin, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. We read that *man drinketh Iniquity like water ; that in us dwelleth no good thing.* It was this consciousness of the depravity of our nature that made the psalmist cry out *I was shapen in Iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Psalms LI. 5.

It was this that caused Isaiah to exclaim *All we like Sheep have gone astray,---we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* Isaiah LIII. and LIV chapters.

Jeremiah says *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*

The Apostle Paul addressing himself to the Romans, declares that the carnal mind is not only averse to what is good, and prone to what is evil, but is at enmity with God, and in the vii. chapter of his epistle to the Romans has these words *I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that*

*dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. verses 18. 19. 20. 21.*

Out of the heart St, Matthew tells us *proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. xv. 19.*

But not only are we sinners, but as such we are under sentence of condemnation. *The soul that sinneth it shall die, saith the Lord, and the wages of sin is death. Rom. vi. 23.* Sin made Cain cry out his punishment was greater than he could bear. *Gen. 1v*

The wrath of God is *revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Rom. 1 18.*

*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil. Rom. 11. 9.*

By one man *sin entered and death by sin. Rom. v. 12* Speaking of the wicked St Paul says *destruction and misery are in their ways. Rom. 111. 16.* In St, Matthews Gospel, we read that the *The Son of man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Chap. x111. verse 41. 42.*

“Nor does our Lord who is the fountain and pattern of true charity, speak a different language.

“He bids us *fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell: Luke xii. 5.* He solemnly charges us  
 “to oppose corrupt nature with the utmost resolution,  
 “on, lest we be *cast into hell, where the worm dieth not*  
 “*and the fire is not quenched. Mark ix. 43.* With tenderness he informs us, that *whosoever shall say to his*  
 “*brother, Thou fool ! shall be in danger of hell fire ;* That  
 “not only the wicked, but the *unprofitable servant shall*  
 “*be cast into utter darkness, where will be weeping, wailing,*  
 “*and gnashing of teeth: And that he himself, far from*  
 “*conniving at sin, will fix the doom of all impeni-*



15

“tent sinners, by this dreadful sentence : *Depart  
“from me ye accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the  
“Devil and his angels.* Mat. v. 22.

Now supposing that we had no other foundation whatever for our belief in original sin, I apprehend we have here before us proof sufficient to convince even incredulity itself. But these are only a very small number of texts compared with those which might be adduced: allowing also that this doctrine were not only above the reach of our reason, but absolutely contrary to it in every sense, it would not appear to me in the least to invalidate the strength of the evidence above stated. For human reason is fallible; Gods word is truth; and if a person were to object to me, that he could not believe in the doctrine of original sin, because he could not reconcile it to reason, I might answer that this is the very cause why it is most likely to be true, for had the knowledge of it been attainable by reason alone, there would have been less necessity for God to have revealed it.

But reason and common observation will if possible afford us still further confirmation of the truth of this doctrine. God is a being of infinite justice, wisdom, power and goodness. He cannot therefore be the author of any thing absolutely evil. Now a great deal both of moral and physical evil, exists in the world. It cannot then proceed from God. Moreover God has denounced a curse upon sinners; God therefore cannot be the author of sin, because he could not curse the work of his own hands. We must look then for the origin of sin in mans abuse of that gift of free will which he was endowed with by the Creator. If we attend to

the natural operation of our own minds, we shall perceive that inclination generally prevails over duty, and that in our dealings with one another we are more frequently prompted by passion, than governed by reason. On reviewing the scenes of past life, and bringing back to our recollection the days that are gone, we cannot but lament, to what little purpose we have lived, how much time has been squandered away in the pursuits of vanity and folly, how many opportunities of doing good, we have neglected; and that we should have so shamefully abused the talents God had given us, to be employed to his glory, and the working out our own salvation. Neither should we be surprized at the unhappy consequences of such a conduct. On the contrary we might naturally expect disappointment disgust and remorse, to be our portion. The experience of all ages, has shown that vice and misery are inseparably connected, and that in proportion as a man deviates from the path of virtue, so in general he becomes unhappy. This unhappiness is not confined to the state of his mind, independent of other contingent circumstances. But he finds in a variety of instances his favourite schemes frustrated, his brightest prospects clouded. Exclusive of that disquiet of mind which is the invariable attendant on a guilty conscience, he sees that he has been all the time pursuing a shadow, and at the very moment when he flatters himself with the hope of attaining his object, and being happy in the possession of it, it eludes his grasp and leaves him nothing but vexation and repentance. Nay how often is even health sacrificed to the sordid views of interest; how often do we accumulate Disease, and hasten the approach of Death itself, by the intem-

perate indulgence of our passions! How frequently does our misconduct not only involve our selves, but our families and our friends in one common ruin! By this animosities are engendered, the ties of affection broken; malice, envy, and all the diabolical passions which torment the human breast, spring up in their room. The world indeed at large presents a vast scene of wretchedness and woe, which could only have arisen from the innate depravity of our nature, and the just vengeance of Almighty God, which our sins had excited against us. What a terrible state then are we in by nature! but how inconceivably more dreadful it would have been, had we been left in this state without hope, without refuge and without a remedy! blessed be God, this is not our case: which leads me to the consideration of the second doctrine I mentioned, viz. of the atonement.

Man therefore having broken Gods law, and in consequence incurred the divine displeasure, must have been for ever at enmity with God, and the child of wrath, had not conciliatory means been adopted, and a sacrifice made to avert the judgments of an offended deity. No less a sacrifice than that made by the Son of God himself could be effectual to this purpose. Nothing less than the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, and his dying the most ignominious of deaths could reconcile God to man. Christ who was the Lord over all, and co-eternal with the father, left the mansions of glory, came down upon earth, assum'd the image of man, bore our infirmities, and tho' without sin, offer'd himself up as a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He died that we might live, by his blood he has cleansed us from our sins, and thro' his righteousness we are become heirs of salvation.



Now the justice of God requires the punishment of evil doers: for tho' by repentance we might forsake sin and lead upright lives in future, still this is no compensation for the crimes already committed. These at least would rise up in judgement against us; besides God's law is so holy and perfect that *he that offends but in one point is guilty of all* and in another place we read that *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.* So that even could our reformation atone for the evil of our past life, we should still from the depravity of our nature, fail of attaining that perfection which Gods law requires to render us justified in his sight.

Jesus Christ in giving himself up as an atonement for the transgressions of the world, performed the whole law. *He came not, we are told, to destroy the law or the Prophets but to fulfil them. Mat. v. 17. 18.* He was made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, and he hath as became him fulfilled all Righteousnes. He is called in Scripture the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world; a Lamb without blemish and without spot. *He who knew no sin was made sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* But not only this, but Christ died for our sins; he rose again for our justification and is now interceding for us at the right hand of God the father. *We are bought* says St. Paul, *with a price* 1 Cor. vi. 20. *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* 1 Cor. v. 7. *He gave himself a ransom for ALL.* 1 Tim. ii. 6. *He became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.* Phil. ii. 8. *Hereby we receive the Love of God, because he laid down his life for us.* 1. John: iii. 16.

When we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. While we were yet sinners, he died for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil World.

Christ hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, surely, he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed; who, his own self, bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should Live unto righteousness.

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us ALL.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that he might reconcile us unto God, by the cross.

He hath washed us from our sins, in his own blood, whogave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

He is the propitiation for the sins of the WHOLE world.

He died for ALL, that they, which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them.

He hath redeemed us unto God, by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

This Jesus, being the Captain of our salvation, and having tasted Death for every man, was made perfect, through sufferings; that, through Death, he might destroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of Death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

He laid down his life, of himself, and no man took it from him. And, hereby perceive We the love of God, because he laid down his Life for us.

Again Christ rose for our Justification;

The same Christ, who died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit.

God raised him up, and shewed him openly unto Witnesses chosen before of God; who said none other things, than those which the prophets, and Moses did say, should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.

As he had power to lay down his own life; so he had power to take it again.

Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; Death hath no more dominion over him.

If Christ be not risen, then is there no Resurrection of the Dead, then is the preaching of the Apostles vain, and our Faith is vain; we are yet in our Sins: But now is Christ risen from the dead, that we also should walk in newness of life.

For in that he died, he died unto Sin once; but, in that he liveth unto God. Likewise, let us reckon ourselves also to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Christ our Lord.

Again Christ liveth to make intercession for us.

He, being received up in glory, and set at the Right Hand of God, in heavenly places maketh intercession for us.

He bare the Sin of many, and maketh intercession for the transgressors.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; who, being made an High Priest for ever, and having an unchangeable Priesthood, is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Their Redeemer is strong; he shall thoroughly plead their cause.



We thereby understand how Christ may be said to atone for the sins of the world.

First. He performed the whole law; secondly. He died for our offences; thirdly. He rose again for our justification. fourthly. He now liveth to make intercession for us at the right hand of God; so that although in *Adam* all have *died*, in Christ shall *ALL* be *made alive*.

But then something is requisite on our parts to render Christ's atonement effectual to our salvation.

This leads me in the third place to the doctrine of justification by faith, under this head: let us consider first, what kind of faith that is by which we are justified; secondly, how it is to be obtained; thirdly, what is the nature of that justification which is wrought for us by faith.

First. It is not a verbal or outward profession of belief which can justify us in the sight of God. Neither is it sufficient that we believe that God is infinitely good, just, wise and powerful. The Devils believe this and tremble. When we speak of these attributes of the deity, we must refer them to some object. When we adore him for his justice, we must bear in our minds, at the same time that we had justly merited his avenging rod, by our wilful disobedience of his laws; and when we praise him, for his goodness, we should recollect, and gratefully acknowledge his unspeakable love in sending his son to suffer in our stead, and accepting his mediation as an atonement for the sins of the world.

Again it is not enough that we believe this in our hearts. We must prove the reality of our faith by our conduct. The tree, we are told is known by its Fruits. *Mat. vii. 20. Faith without works is dead. James 2. 17* It is to no purpose, that we name the name of Christ,

except we depart from iniquity, 2. Timothy, ii. 19.

What doth it profit, says St. James, tho' a man say he hath faith, and have not works? James 2. 14.

Was not our father Abraham justified by works when he had offered, Isaac his Son, upon the altar, verse 21. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect, verse 23. For as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also verse, 26.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another. If ye love me, says our Saviour, keep my commandments. John xiv. 15.

"In strictness neither our Faith nor our works justify us. But God himself justifies us, of his own mercy, thro' the merits of his Son only. Nevertheless, because by faith we embrace the promise of God's mercy, and of the remission of our sins, therefore the Scripture says, That faith does justify, yea, faith without works. And because we receive Faith, thro' the merits of Christ, and not thro' the merit of any virtue we have, or work we do; therefore in that respect we renounce, as it were, again; Faith, Works, and all other virtues. For our corruption thro' original Sin, is so great, that all our faith, charity, words and works, cannot merit or deserve any part of our justification for us. And therefore we thus speak, humbling ourselves before God, and giving Christ all the glory of our justification."\*

Secondly. How is this faith to be obtained? We must remember that faith is the gift of God. Ephes. ii. 8. It is not requisite that we should be Scholars, or possessed of great abilities natural or acquired, or previously acquainted with all the external evi-

\*See Wesley's Sermon on Salvation by faith.

dences of Christianity, to enable us to receive it. By no means. The most likely method, is by prayer and supplication, by divesting ourselves of worldly wisdom, and having in our minds a firm persuasion that we shall obtain our requests. God will be entreated of; and the encouragements for sinners to come to him are numerous, and inviting. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Matthew. xi. 28.

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a man shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke xi. 10. 11.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John xvi. 23. 24.

We must divest ourselves of worldly wisdom.

This has a tendency to raise us in our own estimation, to make us vain of our own abilities, and confident in our own strength. As such it is a great hindrance to our justification by faith. *Professing ourselves to be wise, we become Fools.* Rom. i. 22.

For it is written, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

1. Cor. i. 19.

The world we are informed, by wisdom knew not God. 1 Cor i 21

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise and the weak things of this world, to confound the things that are mighty. verse 27.

We are commanded to become as little children. Mat. xviii. 4. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child he shall not enter therein. Mark x. 15.



And Christ himself thanked his Father that he had hidden *these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.* Mat. xi. 25.

We must likewise have in our minds a firm persuasion that God is able and willing to grant us our request. If we attend to the circumstances, which gave occasion to most of our Saviours miracles, we shall find that the greatest inducement with him to exert this supernatural agency, was, when he perceived that the person brought before him, had full confidence that he should receive what he wanted. Hence the expressions, *Thy Faith hath saved thee. Faith hath made thee whole. O woman, great is thy Faith. According to your Faith be it unto you.*

Hence we are assured also, that *all things whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing we shall receive.* Mat. xxi. 22.

Wherever our Lord found this faith wanting, he declared he could do little for them.

Thirdly. What is the nature of that justification, which is wrought for us by Faith?

In the first place then we are justified from the guilt of our past sins.

*Thro' his name whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins.* Acts. x. 43. *Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.* Mat. ix. 2. *And when he saw their Faith, he said unto him, man thy sins are forgiven thee.* Luke v. 20. *There is therefore no condemnation now, to them that believe in Christ Jesus.* Rom. viii. 1.

Secondly. We are saved from the power of sin: that is, sin has lost its dominion over us; we are no longer slaves to it. We no longer regard God as a severe master, but an indulgent father. *We have not received again the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father; the spirit itself*

*bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*

Thirdly Being justified by Faith, we have **PEACE** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. v. 1. 2.

And again verses 10. 11. *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.*

*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* Rom. v. 11.

He therefore that is justified by Faith, possesses the most solid peace and satisfaction which he is capable of enjoying in this life; his heart is filled with gratitude to the supreme being, he sees the hand of God stretched out before him wherever he goes, it is his meat and drink, his constant study and sincerest delight to do the will of his Father who is in Heaven; if he live he lives to his glory, and if he die, he dies triumphant.

I proceed lastly to consider the doctrine of the New Birth, or the work of regeneration in the soul of man.

If we admit that man in his natural state is *dead in sin*, and reflect for a moment that "*without holiness, as the Scriptures assure us, no one can see the LORD,*" we must at once be convinced of the necessity of some very important change being effected in our lives and conduct before we can be acceptable in the sight of God. Now the word of God tells us that we are not only sinners by practice and habit, but that we are *born in sin*, "*that We are estranged from the Womb.*" "*That We go astray as soon as we are born.*" with many other passages

of a similiar import. Psalms lviii. 3: 9.

Now says our Saviour, *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God* 1 John. iii. 3. Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews, to whom our Lord was at that time addressing himself, saith unto him. *How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* Jesus answered; *verily verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* John iii. 4. 5.

Two things principally offer themselves to our consideration on the present subject. First the nature of the New Birth, or in what the work of regeneration consists. Secondly. By what means this work is accomplished in us.

*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* 2 Cor v. 17.

Mr. Wesley has expressed himself upon this point so clearly, that I cannot forbear quoting his own words.

"Before a Child is born into the world, he has eyes  
"but sees not: he has ears, but does not hear. He  
"has a very imperfect use of any other sense. He  
"has no knowledge of any of the things of the world;  
"or any natural understanding. To that manner of  
"existence which he then has, we do not even  
"give the name of life. It is then only when  
"a man is born, that we say he begins to live. For  
"as soon as he is born, he begins to see the light, and  
"the various objects with which he is encompassed.  
"His ears are then opened, and he hears the sounds  
"which successively strike upon them. At the same  
"time all the other organs of sense begin to be exer-  
"cised upon their proper objects. He likewise  
"breathes and lives in a manner wholly different  
"from what he did before. How exactly doth the  
"parrallel hold, in all these instances? While a man  
"is in a mere natural state, before he is born of God,  
"he has in a spiritual sense, eyes and sees not; a



“thick impenetrable veil lies upon them. He has ears, but hears not, he is utterly deaf to what he is most of all concerned to hear. His other spiritual senses are all locked up; he is in the same condition as if he had them not. Hence he has no knowledge of God, no intercourse with him; he is not at all acquainted with him. He has no true knowledge of the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things. Therefore though he be a living man, he is a dead christian.”

But as soon as he is born of God, as soon as he is regenerate, or in the language of St. Paul *“become a new creature,”* old things are passed away; many of those objects, the possession of which constituted formerly his highest felicity, are now regarded with indifference; several of them with detestation and abhorrence. The pleasures of sense, the applause of the world, the accumulation of wealth, the love of Power have no longer dominion over him. He loves God above all things and his neighbour as himself. Freely he has received, and freely he gives. He esteems no man his enemy, and those whom he formerly regarded as such, he can cordially receive into his bosom. His very best actions upon which he before so much prided himself, and by which he vainly expected to merit Heaven, he now perceives not only to be unprofitable but to have in them the nature of sin. Rom xiii. 23.

In short Creation itself wears a new aspect. Every thing around him appears to bear the stamp of the divine image. He views himself in the light of a prisoner at large; of one who had been immured all his life within the dark and dreary walls of a dungeon, and is now permitted to see the light of the sun “the eyes of his under-

tanding are opened" the light of God's countenance shines upon him, and he feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart." The most trifling omission, the most venial error now fills him with remorse : and if he neglect any opportunity of prayer and praise, if he lose sight of his creator or live as it were without God in the world but for one moment, his conscience accuses him, and he can take no rest, and admit of no comfort, till by repentance he have received fresh assurances of forgiveness, and made his peace with God. *He now finds that wisdoms ways, are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Prov. iii. 17.

He goes on progressively from one degree of holiness to another, he grows in grace, and in the knowledge and the love of Christ, he fights the good fight of faith and finishes his course with joy and gladness.

This is the nature of the New Birth, "and so is every one that is born of the spirit."

Secondly. We are to consider by what means this work is accomplished in us.

It is evident from reason as well as Scripture, that man by the aid of his own reason and strength alone, can never be able to effect this change in himself. He cannot devote himself entirely to a life of piety and virtue, and persevere in it, trusting merely in his own ability. Surrounded as he continually is with trials and difficulties, he never can successfully oppose them all, and come off conqueror by dint of mere assiduity, or by the power of his own single exertions. For so great is the propensity to evil, and so numerous the temptations to commit it, that altho' by vigorous and determined efforts, he may be sometimes kept from falling, yet, the practice of virtue can never become

habitual, and he will always remain a stranger to that peace of mind which true Religion is alone capable of inspiring. The prophet Jeremiah tells us in the x. chapter and 23. verse. *that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.* and again in the xiii. chap, verse 23 *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

In Pauls epistle to the Galatians, we read *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things ye would,* Our Lord himself declares our natural inability to serve God, when he tells us that *no man knoweth the Son, but the father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him* Matt. xi. 27. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, saith the Apostle 2. Cor. iii. 5. It appears then that this great and important work of regeneration in our souls, can be effected by no less a power than God himself.

*By grace are ye saved through Faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* Eph. ii. 8. *By the grace of God says St. Paul I am what I am.* 1 Cor. xv. 10 *And this Grace is the free gift of God thro' Christ* John. vi. 65. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* John. xv. 4. 5. *No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him and I will raise him up at the last day.* John. vi. 44.

From these passages in Holy Scripture, (and they are very few in comparison of what might be brought in proof of what we have advanced)



It is to me indubitably clear, that in order to walk uprightly with our God, and do his will during our pilgrimage here, we must receive Divine aid; we must in short receive a portion of the Divine spirit; we must be no longer *under the law, but under grace*. Rom. vi. 14. And this grace is the free and undeserved gift of God through Christ.

To such as are already converted to God I shall be excused if I offer one word of advice. It is applicable to all of us, and cannot in my opinion be too often impressed upon our memories. It may be summed up briefly in the Apostles own words, *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* 1. Cor. x. 12. Now we should remember the conditions, on which God has promised never to leave nor forsake us; viz, that we never leave nor forsake him. A state of grace is only to be preserved by the same means which were instrumental in procuring it for us at first, and these are frequent and fervent communion with God in prayer.

Religious conversation, a strict guard upon our conduct, and exhorting each other, as opportunity occurs, respecting the duties we owe to God, our neighbour and ourselves, are amongst other qualifications requisiteto make us *bold fast the profession, of our Faith without waveriing.* Heb. 10. 23. *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not:* Gal. 6. 9. The prize is to those who endure to the end *No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* Luke 9. 62. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.* Prov. 14 14.

In the 2. Peter, 2. 21. we read, *it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* St Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, paints

the dreadful consequences of falling from a state of grace. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace. Heb. 10. chap. 26. 27. 28. 29. verses. May we be found in the number of those who have laboured and have not fainted. Rev. ii. 3. who have held the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. Heb. iii. 14. and after having fought the good fight of faith, and finished our course here, be received into everlasting habitations, and hear these comfortable words of our Saviour applied unto us,

*Well done thou good and faithful  
servant enter thou into the joy  
of thy Lord.*

*I am your sincere Friend.*

*Disney Alexander*

*November 14th 1795.*

are (which I well know before) that these do-  
 times are all of them included in the Articles of  
 our Church, in the Homilies, and in the form of  
 Prayer used in Divine Service. You will add  
 moreover that our ministers generally enforce them  
 from the Pulpit, and that the style and language of  
 their discourses are calculated to impress them on  
 the minds of their hearers. Why therefore should  
 you leave the Church and unite yourself with

*Letter 2.*

*Dear Sir,*

The substance of what I offered to your con- sideration in my second letter, may be briefly sum- med up in the following words.

Mankind come into the world in a depraved and fallen condition; as long as they continue in their natural state, they are at enmity with God, and would have for ever remained the subjects of his wrath and punishment, had not Jesus Christ given himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and by his death and mediation reconciled God to man. In order to make this atonement effectual to our Salvation, it is requisite that we repent and believe, that is, that we forsake sin, and have faith in the mercy of God through Christ. This we are unable to do without the grace and assistance of the Divine Being; and after all we have done or can do, we are still unprofitable ser- vants and can only hope for pardon and acceptance through the merits of a Redeemer.

You will now perhaps be ready to say with ma- ny others, that a'l this may be very right, and as far as you know conformable to the obvious sense of Scripture, but you see no reason assigned from any thing I have yet advanced, why I should have joined the Methodist Connection. You will tell



me (what I very well knew before) that these doctrines are all of them inculcated in the Articles of our Church, in the Homilies, and in the form of Prayer used in Divine Service. You will add moreover that our ministers generally enforce them from the Pulpit, and that the stile and language of their discourses are calculated to impress them on the minds of their hearers. "Why therefore should you leave the Church and unite yourself with a particular sect, whose principles of Religion are similar to those in which you have been educated, and which you at present professedly adopt?"

This then is the question in point. I shall endeavour to answer it fully and unequivocally; and I have no doubt but that the candid part of mankind tho' they may not embrace my opinions, will at least give me credit for the sincerity of my intentions.

With respect to my leaving the Church, the charge is entirely groundless; for so far am I from deserting it, that if my life be spared, I shall be more punctual in my attendance there than I have been for many years past. And my reason for this is that I admire that spirit of piety and devotion which run through the greatest part of the Service, I accord heartily with the doctrines of the Church, and I think it expedient for each individual, if he can do it with a safe conscience, to contribute his support to the religious establishment of that country in which he is born and educated, and under the government of which he lives free and happy.

But my reasons for enrolling myself as a member of the Methodist society, are of a far different

nature, and operate so powerfully, on my mind, as to induce me to believe that such a step was necessary both to my present and future happiness.

And that I have not made an assertion of this kind without some foundation, will, I hope appear from the sequel of this letter.

In order to be as concise and methodical as possible, I shall divide my subject into the following distinct sections, I shall consider

First. The institutions or discipline of the Methodists.

Secondly. The mode of performing divine service amongst them.

Thirdly. The general character of their Preachers.

Fourthly. The influence of Methodism on human happiness and conduct.

Fifthly. I shall conclude with a plain and simple narrative of my own experience in religious matters.

## Section 1<sup>st</sup>.

### *Of the institutions or discipline of the Methodists.*

There is too much reason to fear that many who have been brought to a sense of their state by nature, and experienced the pardoning love of God, have nevertheless in process of time forgotten their CREATOR, and plunged afresh into the vices and fashionable levities of the world.

I cannot contemplate such a character as this without horror, and I tremble for the fate of that man who imagines that when he is once justified from the guilt of his past sins, he is no longer liable to err. Such an opinion generally takes its rise from a too confident reliance upon our own ability. And this causes us to overlook the necessity of prayer. It renders us less watchful, slow to examine ourselves, and introduces a neglect of those pious and devotional exercises which are indispensibly requisite to keep up the spirit of vital religion amongst us. Hence it is that we are insensibly drawn off from God, we forget the manifestations of his love, and presuming upon our own sufficiency we gradually relapse into our former apathy and corruption. We should do well to bear in mind, that a life of religion is a progressive one. It is not sufficient that we receive a sense of Gods pardon, and experience the Power of God unto salvation; we must grow in grace; as we have been washed, so we must be sanctified, 1 Cor. vi. 11. we must walk with God; Gal. vi. 9. out of the good treasure of our heart, we must bring forth good things: Mat. xii. 35. we must mortify the deeds of the body. Rom. viii. 13. It is required of us to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of Christ. xiii. 12. to live no longer to ourselves but to the Lord. Rom. xiv. 8 and to walk worthy of our vocation wherewith we are called. Ephes. iv. 1. In short saith the Apostle we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. For God



hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 1

Thes. iv. 1. 3. 7.

I have before observed that a state of grace is only to be maintained and kept alive by the persevering use of those means which are in general instrumental in procuring it for us at first viz. a constant and earnest communion with God in prayer. And this is one of the leading arguments in favour of Methodism.

There is perhaps no sect or body of Christians who have advantages in this respect equal to the Methodists. Their institutions afford them not only very ample opportunities of associating together for the purpose of religious worship, but their discipline is so strict as to require them to attend on all such occasions, except when prevented by sickness or very material business. Besides the ordinary service performed at the Meeting-house on the sabbath and occasional preaching in the course of the week, they have their *Classes*, *Band-meetings*, *Love Feasts* and *Watch-nights*.

Mr. Bradburn in a sermon written in defence of Methodism has treated this part of our subject in so plain and accurate a manner that I shall be excused if I insert his own words.

1. "All who are in connexion with us, meet in what we call a *Class*: That is, from twelve to about twenty members, having a person of more experience than the others (who is termed the *Leader*) to watch over them, meet together once a week, at the time and place most convenient to them. The leader gives out a few verses of a hymn, which they all join in singing. He then makes a short prayer; after which

he converses with each member about Christian experience, giving suitable advice to all, and again they sing and pray, concluding all in about an hour. And are not these meetings agreeable both to the Old Testament and the New? In the dark state of the Jewish Church, when both People and Priests were in general (as is too much the case now) careless and even wicked; "Then saith the Prophet Malachi, *they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*" And to meetings of this kind, we conceive the Apostle Paul alludes, where he advises the Colossians thus: "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" And where this company is thought too large to speak their minds freely, many meet also once a week in smaller companies called Bands consisting of four or five Persons, men with men, and women with women. Nothing can be more simple than these meetings. And we think the Apostle James's words are best understood, by supposing something of this kind: "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.*" But let it be well observed, there is nothing in these assemblies like the confession of sin to a Priest, in order to obtain absolution from him; but the speaking freely of their state of mind to one another, that they may know how to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep, which they could not do without some acquaintance with each others condition.

2. In large Places the Minister meets the Society all together, on Sunday Evenings after Public service, and gives general or particular directions, according to the account he has received through the preceding week, he then also mentions any business that is to be done, respecting either the spiritual or temporal concerns of the Society; relates any remarkable accounts he may have heard of the prosperity of the work of God in other places, and concludes with prayer. These meetings, when judiciously managed are of admirable use. The people are frequently much refreshed therein, and their union greatly strengthened.

3. To prevent our being imposed upon by bad people, the Superintendent Minister, or another by his direction, meets every class separately, once a quarter, and speaks personally to each member. Those that have walked agreeable to the Gospel the past quarter receive Tickets with a portion of Scripture printed on them, also the Month and Year, and a letter of the Alphabet, which being the same in all places, an impostor can generally be detected. And we conceive that something of this nature was used in the primitive Church, especially when any of them went to strange places. ("These Tesseræ, as the ancients called them, being of just the same force with the commendatory letters mentioned by the Apostle.) These are likewise of use in other respects. By shewing these to the persons appointed to regulate the Society, whenever it meets apart, it is easily known who are members. These also furnish us with an easy



method of removing any disorderly member? He has no new ticket at the quarterly visitation; and hereby it is known, that he is longer of our community."

5. There are two other kinds of meetings which we observe, and which were both of of ancient usage. These are Love-feasts and Watch-nights. The former is alluded to by Saint Jude, verse 12. where speaking of the evil doers who associated with the Christians, he says, *these are spots in your Feasts of Love.*

And of these it is generally supposed Saint Peter speaks, 2. Ep. ii, 13. At these, which are kept in large Societies once a quarter, each person takes a bit of plain Cake and a little Water.

We sing a few hymns, two or three of the ministers pray, and if any person has any thing particular to say concerning Christian Experience, none are hindered, if they be short, as the whole should conclude in about an hour and an half.

But these have no relation at all to the Lords Supper. The elements of the Lords Supper are Bread and Wine, (which we receive exactly agreeable to the form in the Common Prayer Book) whereas at the Love-Feasts we use only Cake and Water. The design being simply to testify our Christian Love to each other.

The watch-nights were anciently the vigil kept on the Evenings preceding the grand festivals. Our custom is, about four times a year in the large places, to meet between eight and

" eight and nine at night, and after one of the  
 " Ministers has preached, several others pray and  
 " exhort, giving out at intervals suitable hymns,  
 " which the congregation join in singing, conclud-  
 " ing at twelve o'clock. Exceeding great are  
 " the blessings we find on these occasions.

" They are times of great solemnity, and of-  
 " ten tend, to animate our devotions, and stir up  
 " our minds to a more earnest concern for our  
 " eternal welfare.

" 5. For the management of all temporal af-  
 " fairs, there are persons of known piety, as  
 " well as having skill in accounts, chosen, to  
 " whom the care of these things is committed.

" These Stewards, or (as they were called in  
 " the primitive Church) Deacons, receive what  
 " money has been collected by the Leaders in  
 " their Classes, either for the poor, or for the  
 " expences of carrying on the work. They keep  
 " exact accounts of all they receive and disburse,  
 " which accounts are audited once a quarter, when  
 " there is a meeting of the Ministers of the Cir-  
 " cuit with the Stewards from every place, at  
 " which meeting every thing relating to tempo-  
 " ral concerns is publicly settled.\* The Stew-  
 " ards being changed every two years, prevents  
 " jealousies and evil-surmisings, and gives every

B

\* N. B. The other office among us, namely, that of the Trustees  
 is a legal concern. As Trustees of the Chapel, they have no autho-  
 rity at all to interfere either with the spiritual or temporal concerns  
 of the people. The first belongs to the Preachers and Leaders: The  
 second to the Preachers and Stewards.

“ proper person in the Society an opportunity of  
 “ serving in his turn. Nothing can be more rea-  
 “ sonable than this. If being a Steward be an  
 “ honour, why should not all who are capable,  
 “ share it? If it be a cross, why should not all  
 “ take it up?

“ 6. The last thing I shall mention which re-  
 “ lates to our Discipline, is the constant change  
 “ of the Preachers. We read in the Acts of the  
 “ Apostles, and in many of the Epistles, that the  
 “ first Preachers went from place to place as the  
 “ providence of God opened their way. And  
 “ many YEARS experience has proved to us the  
 “ UTILITY of this plan. The three Kingdoms  
 “ are divided into a number of Districts : each  
 “ of these districts is divided into Circuits :  
 “ and each Circuit has, two, three, or four  
 “ Preachers, according to its situation and im-  
 “ portance. Again each Circuit has a Super-  
 “ intendent,\* who has the care of every thing  
 “ entrusted to him. Not that he is exempted  
 “ from any part of the work ; or has any tem-  
 “ poral advantage from his office : much less has  
 “ he any power to lord it over either his breth-  
 “ ren, or over the people ; only some one must  
 “ keep the various accounts of the Circuit, and  
 “ see that every thing be done agreeable to the  
 “ rules of the Society and the minutes of the  
 “ Conference. Every District has a Chairman,  
 “ to whom either Ministers or private Members  
 “ may complain, in any case that cannot be  
 “ redressed in his own Circuit. The Chair-  
 “ man can then summon the Preachers of the

\* While the Rev. John Wesley lived this Preacher was called the assistant, on account of assisting him. Now he is dead, that word is no longer sense, seeing that it has no relative to which it can with propriety be referred.



\* District, and the<sup>r</sup> judgment is conclusive till  
 " the annual meeting of the Conference, (which  
 " consists of at least one from every Circuit)  
 " whose decision is final. At Conference,  
 " every Preacher's character is examined, and  
 " if any objection be proved against him, he  
 " receives suitable punishment, whether it be re-  
 " proof, the being put from the office of Superin-  
 " tendent, (if he have been in it) the being sus-  
 " pended for a time, or entirely excluded.  
 " The Ministers are then stationed, according  
 " to the best judgment that can be formed, where  
 " they are most likely to be useful, no one con-  
 " tinuing above two YEARS successively in one  
 " circuit, unless God has been pleased to use  
 " him as the instrument of a remarkable revi-  
 " val; and even then, no one ever stays above  
 " the third year. Thus every thing is carried  
 " on with decency and order. The quarter-  
 " ly meetings are subject to district meetings,  
 " and these are subject to the Conference, or  
 " General Assembly, over which among us,  
 " there can be no control, and from whose de-  
 " terminations there is no appeal."

If we add to these their frequent Prayer Meetings, in which a select number of the members assemble together for the purpose of mutual edification, and consider the general uniformity of their conduct, that when visiting one amongst another, their conversation is chiefly confined to subjects of a religious nature, and that they scarce ever part without singing a hymn or praying, we must admit that they have abundant means afforded them

of encreasing in the knowledge and love of God, and encouraging each other to persevere in the paths of holiness and virtue.

Archdeacon Paley observes, that the original teachers of the Christian Religion, in consequence of their new profession entered upon a new and singular course of life. "After men became Christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies."\*

How exactly conformable are the habits and practice of the Methodists in our day to the above account of the circumstances attending the early propagation of Christianity ! May the Lord prosper their labours with his blessing ; and crown with success the honest endeavours of every faithful Disciple of Jesus Christ ! !

\*Vide Paley's Evidences of Christianity, page 38.

## Section, 2.

*On the mode of performing divine service among the  
Methodists.*

THE service commences with singing, in which the greatest part of the congregation joins. The Preacher next makes an extemporary prayer, and after a few more verses of an hymn have been sung, the Sermon follows which is likewise delivered extempore. The people now join in another hymn and the whole is concluded with a prayer and blessing from the Minister.

This tho' a very plain and simple is nevertheless a solemn and edifying manner of celebrating Divine worship. There are few devotional exercises which more powerfully raise the soul to God, than the singing of Psalms. When the language of an hymn is poetical, fluent and intelligible, when the sentiments expressed in it are truly pious and scriptural, the music solemn, and the people serious and earnest, I know of no employment better calculated to excite awful impressions of the Divinity, and to stir up our minds to a closer communion with God.

The hymns used in the Methodist Preaching House, appear to me in a peculiar manner to have this effect. They are adapted to all states and conditions of the mind, and to all situations in life. The sinner is here awaken-



ed to a sense of his own corrupt nature; the soul that is panting after God, and seeking redemption through the blood of Christ, is encouraged to supplicate with boldness the throne of grace, and those who have already experienced the pardoning love of God may feel their devotion strengthened, their confidence renewed, and their hearts re-kindled with holy zeal. The power, wisdom, and goodness of God in the Creation, the love of Christ in the redemption of the world and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost in cleansing us from all unrighteousness by his sanctifying grace, are here particularly insisted upon. The misery of the wicked, and the happiness of the just, are painted in glowing colours, forcibly calculated to inspire terror in the one, and joy and perseverance in the other. Many of the hymns are simply expressive of reverence, praise and gratitude to the supreme being. Many are hortatory, and are full of seasonable advice and instruction adapted to all ages, all ranks of men, all denominations of Christians. Some are consolatory, calculated to revive the drooping spirit, to inspire patience and resignation under afflictions, to dispel our fears, and to animate our hopes. In short, the general tendency of these hymns, is to enforce sentiments of piety to God, love to our fellow creatures, and a due regulation of our own thoughts and dispositions.

And if we add, that the singing is usually conducted with solemnity and order, and accompanied with an appearance at least of respectful devotion, we shall not wonder that this form

of worship constitutes so considerable a part of the service.

I pass on to to consider the subject of prayer.

Prayer is the life and soul of religion. It opens a door of communication betwixt God and man, and is the means we are required to make use of to obtain any promised blessing.

It is a duty which we as Christians are peculiarly bound to perform. God has commanded it; Christ has given us an example of it in his own person by praying himself to his father; and we are not only enjoined but even invited and encouraged to present ourselves as suppliants at the throne of grace. What a privilege is this! What an unspeakable honour that man is permitted to address his Maker, with full assurance that his prayers shall be heard and his requests granted! How ought he to love and praise God for such condescension, and how earnestly solicitous should he be to perform this duty, in the most acceptable manner!

Now one of the chief purposes of prayer is Edification, "*Let all things be done to Edifying*," saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. And surely this advice can never be more applicable than when we are addressing the Majesty of heaven. How can we expect our petitions will be heard, or our praises accepted, if we approach God with our lips at a time when our hearts are estranged from him? Is it not a species of mockery to beg of the Lord to pardon our sins, and give us grace to amend them, when at the same instant we neither feel remorse for the one, nor see any necessity for the other? And how inconsistently does that man act, who, whilst on his

knees at Church; can pray for the inspiration of the holy spirit, and in a few minutes after positively deny that there is any such thing as inspiration in these days? Is it to be wondered at, that such a one should live and die a stranger to its influences? In short if we reflect that God is a spirit, and that He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, we cannot expect to render Him an acceptable service, unless our whole affections be centred in him alone, and our souls animated with a sense of his perfections?

Prayer as an excellent writer expresses it,\* "is the continual panting or breathing of the heart after God; it stays for no particular hours; Its petitions are not picked out of manuals of devotion; it loves its own language; it speaks most when it says least."

For my own part, I confess I always feel most edified and strengthened by extemporary prayer. When I pray in this manner myself, my soul is more alive to God, my thoughts are more firmly fixed on the particular subject of each petition, and I praise God for those instances of his love, which more powerfully occur to my recollection, and which excite the warmest impressions of gratitude, and I entreat Him to bestow those blessings in particular of which I find the greatest need; I maintain a just freedom of soul in my addresses; I change, I enlarge, I contract, I add or omit according to my peculiar sentiments, or the previous state of my mind.

If I am assailed by temptation, I apply earnestly for grace to overcome it; if thro' divine assistance I have been enabled to triumph over any of my spiritual enemies, this calls for a particular return of gratitude and praise; If I find my faith weak, or my confidence



diminished. I pray that God would *help my unbelief*, and replenish me with His spirit; if sick or afflicted, I treat the Lord for patience and resignation; if I do any thing acceptable or pleasing to Him, I present myself at his Footstool with humility and reverence, giving Him all the glory.

Where however, as is sometimes the case, the spirit of prayer is languid, and we want words to express the sentiments of our hearts, we shall be benefited by having recourse to a written form of devotion. A dull and heavy hour in the closet has often been relieved by the use of such composites of mingled meditation and prayer; and many a dry and barren heart has been enabled to offer up in prayer a sweet sacrifice to God, in the words of another man.

The Methodists in their service generally use extemporary prayer. And this appears to me to have many advantages. A constant repetition of the same prayers, begets sometimes an habit of indifference; the mind being less vigorously intent, is apt to wander after other objects; and how happily soever the words might be at first chosen, we still want something new, to keep our thoughts alive. On the contrary, when we hear a minister delivering the spontaneous and unpremeditated effusions of his heart, we naturally imbibe a portion of the same spirit which appears to influence him; our expectations are raised, our attention is fixed, our souls are in patient waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost; and our lips are ready to pronounce an hearty amen at the close of every petition.

Again, if it be enquired what are the general subjects of our petitions. I answer, those which are expressed in the service of the Church. Seeing ourselves to be sinners and guilty before God, we pray that he would pardon our offences, and give us true repentance. We beseech him that he would enable us by his grace to overcome all our spiritual enemies, that he would take away from us all hardness of heart, all pride and malice, all envy and uncharitableness, that he would increase our faith, strengthen our fellowship with him, and our union with one another, and sanctify us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. We make intercessions for all men: we pray for the King and all who are in authority, for the diffusion of Religious knowledge, for the prevalence of Divine Truth; for the alleviation of human misery, for the supply of all our necessary wants. Knowing that the first step towards repentance is a conviction of sin, we pray God to awaken every sleeping conscience; and relying upon His gracious promises, we entreat Him to heal every broken spirit, and to comfort every mourning heart. And as of ourselves we can do nothing that is good, we earnestly pray above all things for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Sermons are likewise delivered extempore. This method of preaching appears to me, often more edifying both to the Minister and the people, than the reading a formal Discourse. We have by this method the simple and unadorned language of the heart; and the Minister feeling himself more interested in his subject, necessarily speaks with greater energy and pathos, and on

this account is more likely to command the unceasing attention of his hearers.

It has been urged as an argument against the preaching of the Methodists, that they inculcate faith in contra-distinction to works, that laying aside the necessity of moral duties, they preach salvation by faith alone: this objection takes its rise, like many others of a similar nature, from ignorance. Now we affirm, that tho' works do not justify a man, yet, they afford the only evidence of a true faith. Genuine faith necessarily produces the purest morality, in like manner, as a good tree cannot fail to yield good fruit. And this is the only true foundation of morality. We cannot love our neighbour as ourselves, till we believe that God hath for Christ sake loved us. And except we have a firm and lively faith in the promises of God, we never can fulfill those conditions, on which alone God will make good his promises to us. What induced Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, but faith? And how should we have ever known that he possessed such strong faith, had not his works shewn it? So it is with every true believer. He proves his fidelity to his Master, by an obedience to his Commands. Let a man have a well grounded faith, and a discharge of moral duties follows of course; we cannot indeed separate them; when once the heart has experienced a real change, a reformation of life is the invariable consequence; and till this change be effected, it will be to no purpose to preach up the excellency of abstract morality. It is like telling us what is our duty, and at the same time with-holding the only means which can enable us to perform it.



And tho' it were possible for us without divine grace to keep the Commandments, yet still we could not be saved by our works, and we should still come short of the glory of God. We are expressly told that *by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified*. Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. *The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ*, and there is but one name given under Heaven by which we can be saved, and that is the name of the LORD JESUS. His grace is freely offered to us, and unless we accept it, we cannot be his disciples; and if we disown him for a Saviour, we cannot expect to be partakers of that Redemption which He has purchased for all who believe in him. Besides, if we consider that *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, we must surely applaud the labours of those Ministers who, like St. Paul, have resolved to preach nothing but JESUS CHRIST and him crucified. *By grace we are saved thro' faith*, saith the Apostle, *and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God*. Eph. ii. 8

The Methodists therefore so far from depreciating the necessity of moral obligation, are amongst its most strenuous and powerful advocates; they place it on the only foundation on which it can exist, and they hold faith as the strongest incentive to the practice of it.

Much severe censure has of late years been passed upon certain vehement expressions made use of in our Meeting Houses; and the people who have thus given way to their feelings, by crying aloud for mercy when they have been convinced of sin, have been made the subjects of ridicule and contempt. Before I became a Methodist, I was equally as inimical to these proceedings as any other person could be; but when I

recollect the emotions of my own mind at the time I was first converted to God. I can no longer be surprized at the same feelings in others, causing them to break out into loud and repeated ejaculations, and giving rise to such outward signs and expressions, as can only be the effect of strong internal agitation. When in the ordinary affairs of life we are oppressed with grief, or elated with joy, do not our countenance, our words, and our gestures evidently bespeak the state of our mind? And shall we wonder that a man just made sensible of his ruined condition by nature, and seeing himself guilty before God, should be so filled with terror and alarm, as to fall prostrate at the throne of grace, and pray aloud for pardon and mercy? And on the other hand, when the sinner thus awakened experiences the pardoning love of God, and feels within him the Power of God unto salvation, is it matter of astonishment if such a one, awhile forgetful of the Place wherein he is, break out suddenly into exclamations of praise and thanksgiving, and in the language of the Psalmist, call upon the people to give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness, to exalt him in the assembly of the elders, to serve him with gladness, and come before His presence with thanksgiving; For he hath brought me out of darkness and the shadow of death, he hath broken my bonds asunder; he hath redeemed me from the hand of my enemy; he hath visited me with his salvation. O! that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Psalms 100. 106. 107.

Whoever reads the accounts of conviction recorded in the New Testament, par-

particularly those mentioned in the Acts, will find that when men were converted under the preaching of the Apostles, their distress of soul was very great, that *they were pricked in their hearts*. Acts, ii. 37. that they came *trembling and fell down*, importunately crying out *Sirs, what must we do to be saved*. Acts, xvi. 30.

I would not be understood from what I have said, to approve altogether, much less to encourage these vociferous meetings; for I believe the grand work of conversion may be carried on with equal effect in perfect silence; but I have adduced the above instances only to prove that such expressions of fervour, are not as many have supposed, inconsistent with true Religion, and do not originate merely from an heated imagination. And it is my real opinion, founded on good authority, that they have often been the fruits of a sincere Repentance, and that in many cases if these meetings have not immediately produced, they have at least preceeded a total reformation of life and manners, amongst numbers of the inferior classes of society.

It appears however to me, that when these sudden conversions happen in a public place of worship, it is far more eligible, where it can be done, for the person so affected to retire into a private house, accompanied by one or two of his friends, who may exhort and pray with him till his soul be set at liberty, and his mind made happy.

Mean time, let us remember that we have different ways of expressing the same feelings; and we should make allowances for the difference of disposition, of constitution, of education and of habit.



Instead therefore of censuring as prepos-  
 tuous and absurd, those actions in others which  
 do not accord with our own ideas and feelings upon  
 the subject, let us rather bear with one another's  
 failings, cast a veil over their imperfections, and  
 howsoever we may differ from some of our  
 brethren in matters of small moment, let us  
 put away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and anger,  
 and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice, Eph.  
 iv. 31. and endeavour as far as we can, to speak  
 peaceably and amicably with all Men.

For the manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord is given in a more remarkable degree the spirit of faith to others the spirit of prayer, and to others the spirit of wisdom.

But there is a diversity of gifts, of different operations of the Spirit. To some is given in a more remarkable degree the spirit of faith to others the spirit of prayer, and to others the spirit of wisdom.

## Section, 3.

### Of the general Character of the Preachers.

OUR blessed Lord previous to his death,  
 animated his Apostles with an encouraging  
 promise of Divine assistance, requisite for all  
 their future engagements, affectionately assur-  
 ing them that he would not leave them com-  
 fortless. I will pray the Father, and he shall give  
 you another comforter, that he may abide with you  
 for ever, even the spirit of truth. He shall teach  
 you all things and bring all things to your remem-  
 brance whatsoever I have said unto you. John.  
 16. & 26. Accordingly we read, that when  
 the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all  
 with one accord in one place. And suddenly there  
 came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty  
 wind, and it filled all the house where they were  
 sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues  
 like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And  
 they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began

to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them  
*testimony.* *Acts. ii. 1. 2. 3. 4.*

In consequence of this divine influence, the Apostles were inspired with the knowledge of different languages, went into various countries, spake the word with boldness, and were enabled to confirm their mission by miracles and other spiritual gifts. Now, altho' these miraculous powers were confined to the early ages of Christianity, yet the saving and sanctifying graces of the spirit still remain.

For the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1. Cor. xii. 7.

But there is a diversity of gifts, or different operations of the same spirit. To some is given in a more remarkable degree the spirit of faith; to others the spirit of prayer, and to others the spirit of resignation.

Some are gifted with shining talents, whose light may illumine those who sit in darkness; whilst others in humble and obscure stations are made happy in the love of God, and enjoy in silence a sweet serenity of mind, which can only arise from the secret workings of God's spirit upon their souls. Again, some are called in a more especial manner to preach the Gospel, and are endowed with gifts which enable them to discharge the duties of their ministry, with boldness and with effect.

And that this gift proceeds immediately from God, or the particular operation of the spirit, is evident from many passages of the New Testament. We find in the tenth Chapter of the Acts, both Jews and Gentiles were converted under the Preaching of Peter, and that as soon as the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured upon

them, they spake with tongues, and magnified God, verse 45, 46. And if, as we are informed, holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the spirit, 2 Peter I. 21, so it is equally certain that at this day no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 12. 3.

It is not necessary that a Minister of the Gospel should be a man of extensive knowledge, of a polished education, or naturally strong parts. So far is this from being required, that the Apostle tells us the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, 1 Cor. iii. 19. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the things of this world? 1 Cor. I. xx. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God hath ordained strength. Which things also we speak not in the word mans wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. 2. xiii.

Many of our Preachers are men of mean birth, without education, accustomed to earn their livelihood by manual labour, and have enjoyed few of those advantages of reading and conversation, which are so amply afforded to the higher classes of Society. Their manners may be unpolished, their language coarse, the sound of their voice unharmonious, and their expression vulgar, yet with all these defects, they shall preach with power, and shall be instrumental in bringing many souls to repentance, and to the knowledge of the true God. Surely the Lord is with them, it is not they that speak but the spirit of their Father which speaketh in them, Mat. 10. xx.

The qualifications therefore which the rules of our Society require, for a Preacher to be received into full connection are the following,



He must have experienced the pardoning love of God. He must have the love of God abiding in him. He must seek and desire nothing but the Glory of God, and be holy in all manner of conversation. He must have read and studied the Scripture, and have a just conception of salvation by faith, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. He must have a tolerable degree of utterance. He must speak justly, readily and clearly; and evidence must be given that some have been truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by his Preaching.

"As long as these marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to Preach. These we receive as sufficient proof, that he is *moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.*" \*

If we consider our Preachers in their ministerial capacities, we find them exceeding active and laborious in the discharge of their functions. They seldom pass over a day without preaching somewhere; not content with their duty on appointed days at their own Chapels, they traverse the Country round, officiating at various private houses, seeking out opportunities of doing good, advising, exhorting, reproof and praying with the people as they see occasion. Not having the fear of man before them they speak the truth with boldness and simplicity; they adapt their manner and their subject to the situation, wants, and disposition of their hearers; they attack their darling sins, and combat their most rooted prejudices; their discourses are alike calculated to awaken the impenitent sinner, and to pour the balm of consolation into the broken and contrite spirit. And those who have already been justified

by faith, and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, are powerfully invited to stand fast in that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made them free, and to bring forth the fruits of the spirit in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Ephe. v, 9.

It is the business also of the Preachers, to meet the Classes occasionally, to be present at all the Love Feasts, and to meet the Society after public service on the Sabbath, when opportunity occurs. In the private walks of life, the character of our Preachers is in general distinguished by an uniformity of conduct, corresponding to the doctrines they teach.

They endeavour to adorn the Gospel of God their Saviour in all things. They are regular and constant in their devotions, in family prayer and private meditations; their manners simple, their conversation edifying, their dress plain, and their deportment grave. They are seldom or never triflingly employed, they have neither time nor inclination to mix in the giddy amusements of the world; They do not affect to be gentlemen; they look upon themselves as the servants of all. They are temperate and sober, have no supernumerary hours to waste in sleep; their chief study is, how to redeem the time, and their greatest pleasure consists in reclaiming men from sin, in beholding the downfall of the kingdom of Satan, and the diffusion of religious light and liberty. But there is still another point of view in which I shall consider them before I close this Chapter, and that is, as visiters of sick and dying persons.

Their affectionate exhortations, and fervent prayers in behalf of the unhappy sufferers, are often rendered great blessings. No time is lost

in unnecessary enquiries, in idle speculations, or abstract reasonings; if they have lived in wickedness, they are earnestly solicited to call upon the Lord, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner! They are directed to fly to that fountain for guilt and sin which is open to all, and by which alone they can be cleansed from their iniquities. *"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."* God desireth not the death of a sinner; he invites you, he encourages you to come unto him; he points out a road by which you may find access, thro' faith; Christ has not only died for your sins, but now liveth, making intercession for you at the right hand of his Father. Give him then your whole heart; cast all your care upon him who careth for you, pray to him to give you faith, cry to him for mercy; remember that Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, that *"his blood can wash the foulest clean,"* that the grace of God is sufficient for you, that his strength is perfected in your weakness. Look up, be of good cheer, perhaps this night your sins may be forgiven you. God himself waiteth to make you happy; the angels of Heaven shall rejoice in your conversion, and you shall find joy and peace and rest to your souls.

When called to visit those who have lived in the fear and love of God, our Preachers endeavour to bring to their recollection the gracious promises of the Gospel, and the happy end which awaits the righteous; they attempt to impress upon their minds, those passages of scripture in particular, where the Deity is represented as delighting in mercy, rather than in



judgment, as chastening every son whom he loveth, as afflicting us only to bring us nearer to himself; to prove our faith, to try our patience, and at last to crown us with a brighter diadem. They tenderly exhort them, to hold fast the beginning of their confidence unto the end, to count the sufferings of this life as gain, to look forwards to that blessed inheritance which is reserved for the saints on high, where sorrow, pain, and sickness shall flee away, where those that have sown in tears, shall reap in joy, and where they shall be as the angels of heaven, singing praises to God and the Lamb, to the endless ages of eternity.

Several are the instances I myself have witnessed of the happy fruits of these visits.

Many a troubled soul hath found rest, many a weeping heart hath leaped for joy; the sting of Death has been withdrawn; the grave has lost his victory. Even now whilst I am writing this, there are some whom I could mention praising God and triumphing in hope, whose feeble tongues can scarcely articulate their Redeemer's name, whose abode here will be very short; probably in a few days their worn-out bodies will be consigned to the dark and dreary chambers of the grave, and their enraptured souls wing their flight to the regions of bliss and glory.

Opinions of principles of religion are not always so valuable as the evidence of our happiness, and regulate our conduct. To be a Christian by name or profession is a very easy thing; but to be actually and experimentally with the living words of Christ, is not always so readily attainable. We cannot receive two masters; we cannot be the servants of the world and

## Section, 4.

### *Of the influence of Methodism, on Human happiness and Conduct.*

BY the term Methodism, I would not be understood to signify a system of opinions confined altogether to a particular sect of Christians. There are no doubt in the Church, and in every Religious Society, men, who are ornaments to their profession, whose life and conduct are in exact conformity to the doctrines they preach, and whose highest ambition it is, to render themselves useful to their fellow creatures. When therefore I speak of Methodism, I use the word not from prepossession or from choice, but because it has been applied by way of distinction to that class of people, with whom I have lately entered into connection. So that in considering the present part of my subject, I must be supposed to refer equally to all those Christians where ever they are, who hold opinions similar to those of the Methodists, and whose life and conversation are corresponding thereunto.

Opinions or principles of belief, are only valuable so far as they influence our happiness, and regulate our conduct. To be a Christian by name or Profession is a very easy thing: but to be acquainted experimentally with the grand truths of Christianity, is not always so readily attainable. We cannot serve two masters; we cannot be the servants of the world and

the Children of God at the same time, and as long as we halt between two opinions, we ought not to be disappointed if we find happiness in neither.

My friend will pardon me, if I call to his recollection a sentiment he has more than once expressed in my hearing, viz. that there was nothing in this world worth living for, that Human existence was a complicated series of calamity and distress, and that even its highest enjoyments never failed to leave a sting behind. From whence, give me leave to enquire, do these gloomy ideas originate? Are they founded in reality? Does the experience of others confirm them? Do they not rather arise from some misapprehension and misconduct of your own, which have led you to seek for happiness where it is not to be found? to go in quest of pleasures, which from the very nature of things are sure to end in disappointment and remorse? In short, a man without Religion, is like a ship without pilot. He is cast to and fro, tost upon the waves of uncertainty, agitated by contending passions, and if he experience now and then a temporary calm, it only serves to render the succeeding storm so much the more terrible.

But Religion, real and experimental Religion, affords very different prospects. It sweetens the bitter cup, it pours balm into the bleeding heart; it smooths the rugged paths of life; in affliction it inspires hope, patience in adversity, and consolation in every time of trouble. It reconciles us to the loss of fortune.



his family, of friends. It enables us to forgive  
 our enemies, to pray for our persecutors, and  
 to love those who despitefully use us. It ren-  
 ders us content with our situation in life what-  
 ever it be, it effectually shames to us the ap-  
 probation of our own conscience, and in short  
 affords us such a peace and serenity of mind,  
 as the world can neither give nor take  
 away. *And this is not mere theory. Experience*  
*has abundantly proved it; among my own recent*  
*observations hath confirmed it; and if we read*  
*upon the subject, we shall find it cannot*  
*be otherwise. Does the experience stand*  
*mon?* The true believer is prepared to encounter  
 every difficulty. Opposition only serves to ne-  
 cessitate his zeal, and every trial he meets with  
 in his Christian practice he regards as a means  
 afforded him of exercising the virtues of pati-  
 ence, forbearance, and resignation to the will  
 of God, and of proving his unshaken fidelity  
 to his Lord and Master. He looks upon the  
 Christian life as a state of warfare; and he sees  
 himself encompassed by enemies from without, and  
 from within; and if he experience the hatred,  
 the ridicule, or contempt of the world, it is no  
 more than he expected; it is what he was suf-  
 ficiently forewarned of. *If the world hate you, saith*  
*our Saviour, ye know that it hated me before it hated*  
*you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his*  
*own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have obel-*  
*ished you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. So*  
*Remember the word that I said unto you, that the servant*  
*is not greater than his Lord, if they have persecuted me, they*  
*will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying,*  
*they will keep your's also. But all these things will they*

do unto you for my names sake, because they know not him that sent me. John xv. 18. 19. 20. 21. In the same Chapter, verse 33. we read *In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.*

The sincere Christian therefore is content to suffer as well as to do the will of God.

He is content to deny himself, to take up his cross and follow his Master. He reckons the sufferings of this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed hereafter; afflictions he esteems as blessings in disguise, and tho' troubled on every side, yet he is not distressed; tho' perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, yet not destroyed, 2 Cor. iv. 8. 9. *As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.* 2. Cor. vi. 10.

But again, not only the poor and the afflicted, but the rich and prosperous are benefited by Christian experience. The Scripture represents riches as a great obstacle to the kingdom of God, and the reason appears to be that they are apt to create in us too strong an attachment to the things of time and sense, and on this account render us less anxious about our spiritual and eternal welfare. Riches are either a blessing or a curse, according to the use made of them. They afford us means of doing good in a variety of ways, and for this purpose they seem to have been given us; and when so employed, they redound to the glory of God, and the good of our own souls. Now a good Methodist cannot be an uncharitable man. He experiences in his own

mind, that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive, that he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that it shall be paid him again, if not in this world, in that which is to come. The love of God abiding in him constrains him to love all mankind; and he endeavours as far as he can, to tread in the steps of his master, going about seeking to do good. In his prosperity he forgets not that God from whom he hath derived every thing he possesses; he sets a just value upon every temporal blessing, eats the bread of thankfulness, and studies to glorify his Maker in every thought, word, and action. He finds that the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light; that the service he is engaged in is perfect freedom, that where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

He loses all relish for the pleasures of sin and vanity; his views are too lofty, his desires too elevated to rest satisfied with any thing short of the Divine presence; and his happiest hours are spent in his own closet, in the company and conversation of his religious friends, and in acts of piety to God, and benevolence to his fellow creatures. In youth he can look forward with pleasing expectation;—in old age he looks back with satisfaction.

In short, the man who has once received assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, and views his God as a reconciled father in Christ Jesus, regards every event that befalls him, as the immediate appointment of the Divine Being, and holds fast that blessed prospect of immortality which the gospel affords to every true believer, such a one I say,



must be happy ; and whatsoever temptation he may be exposed to, whatsoever crosses he may meet with, he will still be enabled by Divine grace to *come off more than conqueror thro' him that hath loved him.*

The principles of Methodism have been grosly misunderstood. We have been charged with pride and uncharitableness ; and because we do not partake in the common amusements of life, and enter into scenes of gaiety and dissipation, we are supposed to be inimical to friendly and chearful intercourse. But let me ask in what does our pride consist ? do we shew it in our persons, in our dress, in our conversation, in our dealings with mankind ? Are we ambitious of fame or of the good opinion and applause of the world ? Do we boast of our own strength, of our own abilities and acquirements ? Do we disdain to visit the afflicted ? Do we look with contempt upon those who differ from us in principles ? Do we not rather debase and humble ourselves in our own eyes, denying ourselves the merit of every thing that we do acceptable in the sight of God ; and if we glory, we glory in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we be said to be uncharitable, when we employ a considerable portion of our vacant time in offices of humanity and kindness to our fellow creatures, in endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the wicked ; when we can sympathize freely with a brother or sister in distress, and rejoice sincerely in the conversion of every penitent soul ? It is our constant prayer that *all* may come to the knowledge of the truth,

and be saved ; and it is no breach of Charity to say, that there is but one road to Heaven, one name only, by which we can be saved ; and that if any one reject the plan of redemption laid down in the Gospel, or in the words of St. John, *entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. I am the door ; saith our Lord, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture.* John. x. 9.

As therefore we are assured from Scripture, that we can never merit Heaven by our works, and as there is but one way of salvation, so far is the preaching of this doctrine from being uncharitable, that it appears to me the greatest act of kindness, the highest office of humanity to promulgate it by every means in our power, and this we must do if we have any real regard to the eternal and spiritual concerns of mankind. *For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?*

And why should we be deemed unsociable or averse to friendly intercourse ? is it because we can employ ourselves agreeably without the aid of cards, dancing, plays, and other amusements of a similar nature ? because we deal not in unmeaning compliments, and our discourse is not embellished with strokes of satire, or lively sallies of wit and humour ? We enjoy the pleasures of religious conversation too much to stand in need of any of these entertainments. We delight to tell and to hear of the goodness of our heavenly Father ; and

our fellowship with God is often strengthened by the free and unrestrained manner in which we communicate our sentiments.

But further, The influence of Methodism is chiefly observable among the lower orders of society. It is to the poor, to the ignorant, to the simple, that the preaching of the Methodists is rendered more particularly useful.

Many are the instances in which men of the most abandoned characters have been reclaimed; drunkards have become sober, sabbath breakers have been brought to esteem it their highest privilege and greatest delight to keep that day holy; and swearers have ceased to take the name of the Lord in vain.

Discontent, idleness, and profligacy, of every kind have been banished; and men have learnt to be satisfied with what God and the labour of their own hands have provided for them, and to be diligent in their respective callings, and active in the discharge of the relative and social duties of life.

*The poor* our Saviour tells us, *have the Gospel preached unto them*; and St. James says, *has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?*

In humble and obscure stations, men having less to attach them to this world, have more ample opportunities of living near to God, and of growing in grace; and in this way distress and affliction sometimes operate by constraining us as it were to apply to God for succour and for consolation, when we find that vain is the help of man, and there is nothing on earth which can give us that assistance



our souls stand in need of. It is in the hour of sickness and upon the bed of death, when the cheering influence of true Religion shines upon the heart in its full lustre; it is when we are forsaken and rejected by men, that God is ever present and dear unto us; and it is this alone which will enable us like the Apostles of old, *to rejoice in tribulation*, knowing that though *many be the afflictions of the righteous, the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* Psalms xxxiv. 19.

## Section, 5.

*Of my own Experience in Religious matters.*

I come now to treat of the most interesting part of my subject.

I am aware that the account I am about to give of what I call my own experience, will be viewed by different people in different lights. The greater part will look upon me as an enthusiast; some who have my interest at heart, and whom next to God I believe it my duty to reverence and obey, will regard me perhaps with an eye of pity, and be sorry that I should have exposed myself as they think to the ridicule of the world; some may be apt to charge me with presumption, whilst others, who have experienced similar convictions themselves, will rejoice and congratulate me on the occasion, and hail me as a friend and brother in Jesus Christ.

In my first letter I gave an account of the reasons which induced me to embrace the Christian Religion as a Revelation from God: in my

second and former part of this, I have assigned my motives for uniting myself with the society of Methodists. I shall now attempt to describe as concisely as possible, the state of my mind, and the convictions I at different times experienced from the period that I began to think seriously to the present moment. And may that God who knows I cannot deceive him, and that I have no intention to deceive others, assist me in writing *the words of soberness and truth!* and if He vouchsafe to render these letters instrumental in the conversion of a single soul, I shall esteem my time usefully employed, and my labour well rewarded.

It was about the middle of September, when I began to have any very serious impressions. For some time before I had often been uneasy and discontented in my mind; I was never comfortable when alone; and when I went into Company, I still found a something wanting to render society perfectly agreeable and congenial to my own taste. The general topics of conversation appeared to me rather frivolous and uninteresting. I did not find that enjoyment in the amusements of life which others who partook in them appeared to do, and many of them were succeeded with disappointment and regret. I had more pleasure frequently in the anticipation, than I realized in the possession of the objects in view. And when I came to reflect deliberately on the manner I was spending my time, and the little satisfaction which it afforded me, I felt a consciousness of having acted wrong and made resolutions to reform. But making them in my own strength, and relying on my own natural exertions to accomplish them, they

were to no purpose, and the least temptation coming in the way plunged me afresh into those very follies I had a little before determined to renounce. Thus it is that the light of nature and the efforts of unassisted reason, are but feeble barriers, when opposed to the influence of custom, and the power of temptation.

Finding however less and less satisfaction in the course I was pursuing, I mixed less frequently with the world, avoided its amusements, and spent the greatest part of my leisure time in private. Solitude soon became no longer irksome; my books were my companions, and my own thoughts my delight. I found myself happier in proportion as I secluded myself from company. I could think of nothing with satisfaction but Religion, and all conversation, which had not this for its object, appeared to me dry and uninteresting. I began to pray earnestly that God would enlighten my understanding, that he would remove my doubts and fears, and establish my faith on a sure and solid foundation. Some sermons which I heard about this time, together with several conversations which I had upon religious subjects with different people, stimulated me in my desires after truth. I grew more fond of retirement; reading, meditation, private prayer, social worship, and the company of a religious friend, constituted my highest felicity. I was anxious to redeem the time I had so shamefully squandered, and to devote the rest of my days to the service of my God and the good of my fellow creatures. The Bible was my peculiar study, I perused it with delight and improvement. The more I read, the more clearly I saw my own ignorance, my own inability to help myself,



and the sinfulness of my past conduct. But I discovered likewise a way open for the remission of sins and that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all unrighteousness. I saw the necessity of becoming *a new creature in Christ*, that without faith I could not please God, and that without Divine grace I could not perform the Divine will. I was sensible of my want of faith; the fear of man and the power of sin, tho' somewhat diminished, still reigned unsubdued in my heart; and tho' I felt no relish for the pleasures I had formerly indulged in, I did not yet experience that inward peace and joy which the Scripture assures us is the priviledge of the righteous. I continued to go to Church on a Sunday when opportunity occurred, and to the Methodist meeting as often as I could. I was much assisted by the prayers of my friends as well as my own; and amongst other books which I read, I think it my duty to mention one in particular, which was remarkably profitable to me; and that was Mr. Fletcher's appeal to matter of fact and common sense.

My mind now became uncommonly active; ideas crowded in upon me so fast and in such succession, as almost to banish sleep; I could not bear to sit long at table during meals, I lived very temperately, and notwithstanding the present agitated state of my spirits, I went thro' my business, with ease and alacrity. I cannot say that I had yet had any distinct assurance of the forgiveness of my sins and acceptance with God; but I felt an indescribable conviction in my mind that he would pardon me, and receive me into his favour, and adopt me as

his child, before he took me hence. This conviction was an unspeakable source of comfort and happiness to me; I prayed more fervently than ever; and my thoughts were almost continually directed to Heaven and Heavenly things. But the time now approached when my hopes were more than realized, my expectations more than answered. Mr. Gibbons one of our Preachers, calling at a house where I was visiting, after some conversation had passed, went as usual to prayer. My mind was affected in a remarkable manner during the whole time I was upon my knees. I felt what I cannot express; I was overpowered; I scarce knew with what; I was agitated with alternate emotions of fear and hope, of sorrow and of joy. When the prayer was concluded, I wept bitterly; I shed tears; but they were the tears of joy. Gratitude and love absorbed every other feeling; I saw as it were, the sins of my whole life, set in array before me, and at the very same instant all blotted out in the blood of the Lamb. I saw myself freely justified; I was enabled to look up to God as a reconciled father, and I felt *the spirit itself bearing witness with my spirit* that I was a child of God. Rom. viii. 16. *Praise the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name*, was the constant language of my heart. I was indeed *born again*; old things were *passed away*, all things were *become new*. Every doubt and every fear vanished; my faith was strong, and I experienced such a lively hope of the glory which is to come, that I was equally resigned to die as live. I view'd

myself in the light of a prisoner set at large ;  
 my chains were broken ; my soul free ; I breath-  
 ed a new atmosphere ; my mind acquired new  
 vigour, and my *whole body was full of light*. I  
 had before lived to myself alone ; I now felt  
 alive to God ; I had formerly trusted in my  
 own strength, I now relied on the merits of  
 my Saviour. My past life had been a scene of  
 contending passions, a succession of vanity, folly  
 and disquietude ; my greatest enjoyment now  
 consisted in close communion with God, and  
 in sentiments of adoration and praise for the  
 manifestation of his pardoning mercy. I ex-  
 perience*d that perfect love which casteth out fear* ;  
 I found indeed *that wisdoms ways are ways of*  
*pleasantness, and all her paths are peace* ; that the  
*service of God is freedom* and that *where the spirit*  
*of Lord is, there is liberty*. I could sleep but  
 little ; gratitude and ejaculations of prayer and  
 thanksgiving kept me waking a long time after  
 I went to bed ; there was one night in particular  
 in which I think I never closed my eyes to  
 sleep, but continued singing praises and lifting  
 up my heart to God till I rose in the morning.  
 The gracious promises of the Gospel were im-  
 pressed powerfully on my mind. I did truly  
 find, that having first sought *the Kingdom of God*  
*and his righteousness, all other things were added unto*  
 me. I had not a wish respecting myself ungra-  
 tified. Time appeared too short ; and yet  
 the prospect of Eternity was glorious to contem-  
 plate. Death had lost its sting ; the boasting  
 grave its victory. I realized a paradise on earth.  
 I imagined I saw a spirit of Religion diffusing  
 itself around me on every side ; almost every house  
 seemed to be an house of prayer ; and I thought



that by a few words I could bring every body to embrace the same faith as myself. I wished for others to be partakers of that happiness I experienced, and that we might all unite with one voice and one heart, to praise the Lord for his goodness, and be as *one fold under one shepherd.*

I saw now the providence of God exemplified in every past event and circumstance of my life. Proofs of his wisdom, his power and goodness were manifested in those very occurrences which had formerly given me pain, and which I then regarded as serious evils. I saw that those whom I had looked upon as enemies ought rather to be esteemed amongst my real Friends; for the uneasiness they had caused me had contributed to bring me to a thoughtful state of mind, to an earnest waiting upon God, and to seek for happiness where alone it was to be found. Often did I repeat with delight these words of the Poet,

Now I'll sing of Jesu's merit  
 Sprinkled by Redeeming blood;  
 And my weary troubled spirit  
 Now finds rest in thee my God,  
 I am safe and I am happy  
 When in thy dear arms I lie  
 Sin and Satan cannot harm me  
 Whilst my Saviour is so nigh,

Now I'll sing of Jesu's merit  
 Tell the world of his dear name,  
 And if any ask his Spirit  
 He is still the very same.

He that asketh soon receiveth;  
 He that seeketh soon shall find;  
 Come, for whosoe'er believeth  
 He will never cast behind.

3

Now our Counsellor is pleading  
 With his Father and our God,  
 He for us is interceding,  
 By the purchase of his blood!  
 Hark! methinks I hear him praying  
 Father, save them; I have died:  
 And the Father answering, saying  
 They are freely justified.

A Sermon which I one day heard Mr. Pritchard preach on the subject of Charity, affected me very sensibly. I was convinced that tho' I loved God, I had not loved my neighbour as I ought; that I had not done altogether to others what I should wish others to do unto me. And I considered that the best proof I could afford of my love to God, was the exercise of universal love and goodwill towards all men. As God therefore had forgiven me my sins, I was constrained to forgive all who I thought had offended or injured me. I was dead to every impression of anger or resentment, I regarded all mankind as my equals. I sympathized with the afflicted; visited, relieved, and comforted to the best of my ability the sick and the needy; I found it more profitable to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; I wept with those that wept, and rejoiced with those that did rejoice. I experienced now the value of health and other temporal blessings, and the possession of these excited in

me fresh sentiments of gratitude, and demanded constant returns of thankfulness and praise. My heart was devoted to God; my thoughts centered in him, I feared neither the censures nor courted the applause of the world, I endeavoured to have in view the Glory of God in all my words and actions. I could say with the Psalmist *The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness; for the Lord is my Sun and my Shield; the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*

Mr. Charles Wesley in one of his hymns, represents so well the state of the soul when newly converted to God, and his description accords so exactly with my own feelings at the time, that I shall make no apology for inserting it here.

How happy are they  
Who the Saviour obey,  
And have laid up their treasure above!  
Tongue cannot express  
The sweet comfort and peace  
Of a soul in its earliest love.

That comfort was mine,  
When the favour divine  
I first found in the blood of the Lamb;  
When my heart it believ'd,



What a joy I receiv'd,  
 What a Heaven in Jesus's name!

I was a Heaven below

My Saviour to know

The angels could do nothing more

Than fall at his feet,

And the story repeat,

And the lover of sinners adore,

Jesus all the day long

Was my joy and my song:

O that all his salvation might see!

He hath lov'd me, I cried,

He hath suffer'd and died,

To redeem such a rebel as me.

On the wings of his love

I was carried above

All sin, and temptation, and pain,

I could not believe

That I ever should grieve,

That I ever should suffer again.

I rode on the sky,

Freely justified I!

Nor envied Elijah his seat;

My soul mounted higher

In a chariot of fire,

And the moon it was under my feet.

Oh! the rapturous height

Of that holy delight

Which I felt in thy life-giving blood;

Of my Saviour possess

I was perfectly blest,

As if fill'd with the fulness of God.

It is not to be wondered at, that my present conduct should appear so strange in the eye of the world, as to lead many to suppose I had lost my reason and was beside myself. I found nevertheless, that I was equally capable of attending to business, and of discharging the necessary duties of my calling, with credit to myself and satisfaction to others. But I am inclined to believe, that had this rapturous state of mind continued much longer, it would have been more than my strength could have supported; and it pleased God that I soon became more calm and composed, and I enjoyed a solid peace, which tho' less extatic, was infinitely superior to all the pleasures this world could afford, and which I would not have exchanged for the wealth of the Indies. This peace I still retain; I praise God night and day, it is my *meat and drink* to do his will. I know that it is *God that worketh* in me *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; to him therefore I ascribe all the glory of every action pleasing and acceptable in his sight; "I praise him for all that is past, and I trust him for all that's to come."

I still however feel the necessity of a watchful and praying spirit. I feel that tho' the power of sin be subdued, yet, the liability to commit it still remains, and that when temptations assail and crosses intervene, my temper is apt to be ruffled, emotions of an unpleasant kind arise in my breast which tend to humble me in the dust and cause me to apply earnestly to the throne of grace, that God would renew my strength and *establish my goings*.

I am thankful that God hath given me a tender conscience, and that the least omission of any known duty, as well as the commission of any actual sin, fills me with remorse and godly sorrow.

This teaches me my dependant state, is an excellent preservative against presumption and spiritual pride, and drives me continually to that fountain which is ever open to the sincere penitent. "Every moment Lord I need the merit of thy death", and fresh supplies of grace. May that God who hath justified me freely sanctify me wholly and preserve my whole spirit soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ !

I have now spoken my mind freely and fully. I have discharged a duty which I thought incumbent upon me to perform, and I leave the event to God.

I cannot conclude without expressing a grateful acknowledgement of the many marks of candour and liberality I have experienced from my friends. I have not only met with less opposition than I expected, but I have been treated in many respects with a degree of tenderness and affection which I fear is not very commonly displayed on like occasions. God knows that the only circumstance which has afforded me any uneasiness is that my conduct should not altogether be approved of by those persons whom it is no less my interest and inclination than my duty to please and obey. But if, *when a man's ways please the Lord, he can make even his enemies to be at peace with him,* how much more may we expect that he will establish union, harmony and love amongst those who are related to each other by the ties of nature and a long habit of social intercourse.

*I am your sincere friend,*

*Disney Alexander.*



This teaches me my dependant state, an excellent preservative against presumption and spiritual pride, and drives me continually to that fountain which is ever open to the thirsty penitent. "Every moment I find I need the merit of thy death," and fresh supplies of grace. May that God who hath justified me freely condemn me not, and preserve my whole spirit, soul, and body thenceforth into the company of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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I am your sincere friend,

Henry Alexander